

The League of Women Voters of Dane County, Inc.
2017 CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT AWARD RECIPIENT

🌀 Shirley Haidinger 🌀

Our 2017 Carrie Chapman Catt award winner got interested in voting issues around the time she retired from a long career in state service in Wisconsin government.

Shirley Haidinger began her state career at the University of Wisconsin dealing with keypunch computer cards. She moved to the Department of Justice Crime Information Bureau working with data. She finished her career at the Department of Natural Resources, where she managed air quality data for more than twenty years.

Shirley met Paul Malischke in the early 2000's, and started working with him on voting issues. After she retired in 2006, she worked in a small group with Paul helping with student registration at the UW-Madison. She gradually she took on more voter registration projects.

Shirley has done regular voter outreach at the Downtown Farmers Market and the Dane County Job Center on Aberg Ave. She worked as part of the League team at the Student Activity Center on campus for the November election, where we registered hundreds of voters. She has been part of registration events that our league organized at Madison College during the last decade.

My favorite stories about Shirley are the outreach opportunities she developed in her neighborhood. The most unusual was probably her outreach at Pierce Liquors.

She creatively worked with management of the new apartment complexes on East Washington Ave to organize multiple sessions in which she registered dozens of residents, even persuading the management to email the residents to alert them to the opportunity to register to vote.

When management became less open to that process, she moved her efforts to Festival Foods, and contacted the new residents as they shopped at their local grocery.

In totaling up reports submitted by Shirley in the last year, which include registrations at events she organized, we came up with 557 voter registrations. And that does not include the dozens of voters Shirley registered at Epic in the last year, or the registrations that were part of her efforts during In Person Absentee Voting at the UW-Madison or libraries.

All of this work was done with extraordinary thoroughness and accuracy. One time out at Epic, I was checking forms, and finally found one minor omission on a form that Shirley had witnessed. The Epic staffer was quite amused at my glee at finally finding one minor problem Shirley had to correct.

I am delighted to present the Carrie Chapman Catt award to Shirley Haidinger.